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The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Madam Vice President:

We write to you today to strongly urge you to visit the U.S.-Mexico border as soon as possible.

On March 24, 2021, President Biden announced that he had appointed you to lead¹ "efforts to stem migration across the U.S.-Mexico border." This is a daunting task, and as we personally experienced on our recent trips to Texas, you cannot fully grasp the extent of the crisis until you physically see what is happening at our southern border and the conditions at the Customs and Border Protection stations. There is no substitute for seeing overcrowded migrant facilities in person and speaking directly with our border agents and officers who are dealing with this crisis on the human level every day. Therefore, we feel it is imperative that you and your advisors travel to the region soon as you work to resolve this situation.

According to NPR², "The number of migrants encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border in March was the most in at least 15 years, as agents for U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) apprehended nearly 172,000 people." This was a 71% spike from February, and all indications say the numbers will remain high, if not increase, over the coming months.

We are concerned by reports that human traffickers are actively recruiting migrants to make this perilous journey. Every day we are seeing reports on the news or receive notices from the Department of Homeland Security about the individual tragedies: a 10-year-old boy found abandoned³ near the southern border, tender-age children being dropped from the top of the border wall, and people left by smugglers to die in the desert, all victims of illegal immigration. CBP stated that "Scenes like these are all too common, as smugglers continue to abandon children in desolate areas, with zero regard for their well-being."

We also have serious concerns that the record number of apprehensions are overwhelming law enforcement and their ability to secure the border. It was reported⁴ that at least two men

¹ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-taps-harris-lead-coordination-efforts-southern-border-n1261952>

² <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/08/985296354/almost-19-000-migrant-children-stopped-at-u-s-border-in-march-most-ever-in-a-mon>

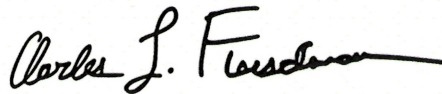
³ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/boy-abandoned-us-mexico-border-officer-help/>

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/cbp-stopped-two-men-terror-watchlist-border-says-such-incidents-n1263167>

matching names on the FBI's terrorism watchlist were arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border, indicating foreign bad actors are exploiting this migration surge to enter the country. Further, CBP reports that the workload and workforce demand large migrant groups pose to law enforcement simply creates opportunities for smugglers to bring drugs, guns, persons, and other goods into the country without threat of detection. The national security implications of the ongoing chaos must be addressed.

We are greatly concerned about the Biden administration's ability or willingness to respond to this humanitarian crisis when neither the President nor the Vice President has gone to the Southwest border to assess this crisis for themselves. We invite you to make the journey to the southern border and to work with Congress to find solutions to mitigate this humanitarian and national security crisis in order to protect our nation.

Sincerely,



Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress



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